



CASE STUDY

Helping publicists across the Macmillan group to coordinate, track and manage media contacts through a redeveloped and streamlined Salesforce database.

Macmillan

Macmillan is comprised of a group of independent publishers offering a diverse range of fiction and non-fiction, adults and children's books in a range of formats.

There is a publicity department within each of the publishing divisions and each have commonalities but also differences in the way they work. In addition to this, some data is shared across all divisions and some data is private. The publicity system did not meet requirements across the divisions and there were a number of issues and concerns that led the business to seek an improved solution.

The problem

The project and implementation of the existing Publicity application had not gone smoothly. The project delivery team had not been consistent, expected timelines were not met, and the vendor had a limited understanding of the publicity processes within publishing. This manifested itself in the technical solution. The design and development had fallen short in several areas resulting in the system being complex and cumbersome to use, and data quality had been compromised.

This led to a lot of disgruntled publicists. Ribbonfish's interviews with key stakeholders highlighted the following issues:

- Data quality was compromised with many duplicate records, duplicate information and inaccurate data
- Some data needed to be shared across the teams whilst some remained private to individual publishers. Access to the private data was neither intuitive nor streamlined
- Creating, accessing, honing and cherry-picking lists was convoluted. There were too many ways of doing the same thing and some basic list building activities were not possible or worked inconsistently

The solution

Macmillan engaged Ribbonfish to carry out an audit of the incumbent Publicity App to assess the problems and find out where the system fell short in delivering the requirements and business outcomes. Ribbonfish interviewed the Publicity directors and key staff and identified:

- User problems with poor design and functionality
- Low take-up of the system due to usage and data problems
- Potential to better exploit core Salesforce Technology
- The need to make substantial improvements, quickly, and at a reasonable cost, in order to restore faith in the App

Ribbonfish took this feedback and developed solutions to usage issues, re-engineered the App to optimize use of Salesforce technology, and prioritized enhancements that provided most value. They also advised on data cleansing to ensure the publicity teams trusted it and wanted to use it.

There was a requirement to store private data per division as well as shared data across all the departments. The private data could not be seen at a glance or via generated reports, so the applications was re-engineered to ensure this data could be easily viewed in context.

Cherry picking is a key element of honing a list, but this was a major area of frustration across all the users. This functionality is at the heart of what publicists do day in and day out and the existing system was not very good at it. Ribbonfish re-developed this, the cornerstone of the application, to be responsive, dynamic and well-designed, providing the ability to effectively manage lists from creation to mail merge, all with the ability to cherry pick specific records for use.

The outcome

Ribbonfish have re-developed the Publicity system for Macmillan. It now has “form” and “substance”. It looks well crafted, facilitates the business processes, saves time, and leverages the Salesforce platform. User adoption and satisfaction ratings have increased dramatically. All divisions are using one solution allowing the decommissioning of legacy systems, data is shared where appropriate saving time and effort across the group. Data is private where necessary enabling competitive advantage across different imprints. Day-to-day administrative tasks are simpler and quicker and lists are more targeted.

“I’m happy to report that we seem to have both a system that works beautifully and a group of satisfied users, everyone is very happy with the developments, and we really appreciate all of the work Ribbonfish put in to making this such a successful project. Working with Ribbonfish really was a pleasure – thank you for all your help!”

Hillary Scarbrough, Senior Director of Business Systems, Macmillan

